361 The first essential condition is a nearby source of drinking water,
312 a stream, a marsh, or one or more natural springs. These springs are quite numerous in the region we visited. Their water is clear, limpid, and refreshing; the supply is abundant and regular in the dry season as well as in the rainy season. The natives value their
● [462] benefits so highly that the women willingly go 200 or 300 meters to a spring in the forest rather than to draw water from the stream.

361 [35] In addition to a bountiful spring, the native seeks a healthful location and takes this into account when choosing the future site for his household. The ground that suits him best is slightly raised, dry, open, and located near the forest or in the midst of a fertile plain.

Aside from their hygienic benefits, such locations afford a measure of security to the settler. At the slightest alarm, the whole community leaves both village and home to run into the forest, where they are sheltered and completely safe.

Finally, the native looks for the fertile soil essential to the welfare of his crops. The well-being and even the existence of his whole family depend in large measure on the yields from these crops.

The new site then, must fulfill all these indispensable conditions. If the place that meets these requirements is to be found in a region full of game and not far distant from a stream, marsh, or watercourse rich in fish, the native will not fail to choose such a privileged spot. These conditions will determine the duration of the native's settlement. [Ed., a passage is omitted here.]

361 When the community has decided to move and a location suitable
313 for a new settlement has been found, all the adult males leave to prepare the ground. This work is particularly arduous in forested areas. In the grasslands it is sufficient to cut the grass, or simply to burn it, and then to hoe thoroughly the area for the new village and its fields and to carry off all the rubbish, while the establishment of a village in the heart of the forest requires far greater effort and work. The first few days are devoted to marking out the boundaries and clearing the small trees, creepers, bushes, grass, etc. Everything that can be cut with a knife or ax is hacked down. Large tree trunks are chinked at the base; then the native heaps all the rubbish [36] from the first stage of clearing around them and

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[962]

When new fields are prepared, the first work of clearing them falls to the men. This work is done with a knife and an ax. The shape of this latter tool is the same among all the tribes: a wooden handle with a bulge at one end like a club; and a long, narrow, triangular piece of iron embedded laterally in the handle.

After clearing the brush, the men pile the rubbish at the feet of the large trunks and set it on fire. The tree, undermined at its base, finally topples over and remains where it falls.

[962]

The women take charge of the other work of cultivation. This varies [57] very little from tribe to tribe, and even the various crops of manioc, maize, peanuts, rice, bananas, and sugar cane require only quite rudimentary special labor.

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Manioc is the staple food of the tribes over most of the region we visited. The native cultivates both sweet and bitter manioc. The latter variety is the more widespread. To prepare the ground, the native woman uses an iron hoe, triangular in shape,

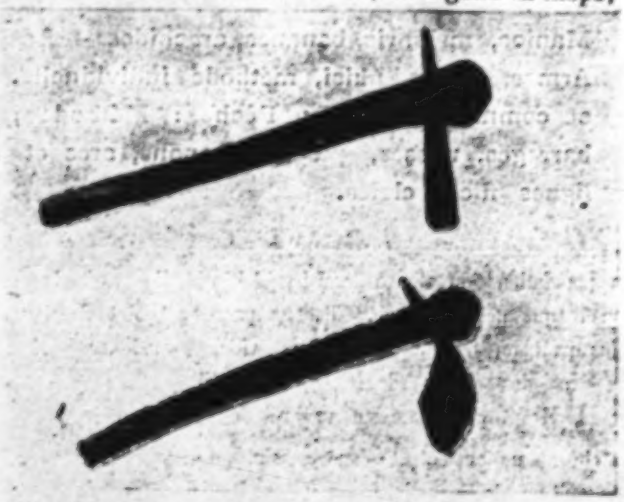


Fig. 37. Ax and Hoe from Lake Leopold II-Lukenie.

with a flaring base and a spike at the top. This piece of iron is embedded laterally in a rough-hewn wooden handle which bulges at the end like a club. The purpose of the club-like end is two-fold: it provides a better hold for the piece of iron, and it intensifies

M 243 The cultivation of rice serves less to nourish the native than for trade. He usually sells his harvest immediately after the husking.

T M 247 Peanuts thrive in the region of the Banfumu and among the Bankutshu. They grow best in light soil and are not suitable for land cleared from the great forest. The crop demands a great deal of care and regular upkeep. Fields invaded by weeds yield nothing. The harvest takes place when the crop is mature and is the task of the women with the help of the children. The peanuts are placed in baskets carried on the back and taken to the village. The native spreads them out in the sun to dry. He turns them again and again, two or three times a day, and brings them into the hut at night.

M 249 Sugar-cane plantations are set up in marshy lowlands.

[462] All the work on this crop falls to the men. These plantations

[473] are found only in regions where the natives make masanga, sugar-cane beer. Sugar-cane fields are especially numerous in the villages on the lower Lukenie and the Fimi.

M 244 As a rule the natives also cultivate a few legumes, sweet potatoes, and yams, but on a small scale and without giving them any particular care. [61]

Hunting

M 224 462 Hunting is practiced only by men. They engage in it, not for sport, diversion, or relaxation, but for the sole purpose of procuring meat and fat.

M 224 857 From their earliest childhood, the boys get together to beat the grass and catch mice, rats, and other rodents which swarm in the bush. Nothing is more interesting than to see them at work. Ten, fifteen, or sometimes twenty of them form a large circle. Armed with sticks, they beat the grass and make an unbelievable din. Little by little the circle narrows, moving in on a small well-cleared space. The oldest, most daring and most agile of the boys keep watch over this space, their eyes alert and riveted on the edge of the grass, ready to pounce. The beaters redouble their zeal, strike, shout, gesture, and gradually drive all the rodents

1: Maes--47 E-5 (1913-1914) 1924 FO32 Mongo FO32
Sakata FO43

The manufacture of bows and arrows is practiced only by men.

The native chooses the wood for his arrows very carefully. It must be light and very tough. After scraping it carefully with a small knife, he carves one end into a point and cuts a notch at the other end for the bowstring. Both ends are slightly hardened by fire. The part where the vanes are to be attached is scraped with the greatest care. The lines marking the place for the vanes are drawn with the point of the knife, and the vanes are made out of half

Fig. 43. Basakata Armed with Spears, Bow and Arrows.

a feather from the wing of an eagle or guinea fowl. The native sets all [68] three vanes in place at the same time and fastens them with a fiber thread coiled in spirals. This fine ligature is strengthened with bulungu resin which is applied in a liquid state and thus forms a very light sheath when dry.

The arrowhead ends in an elongated, conical socket into which the upper end of the wooden shaft is fitted. The general shape of the head is that of a narrow, oblong leaf, sometimes provided with one or two barbs. This shape is found throughout the Lake Leopold II and Lukenie regions. The notch for the bowstring is quite even and shallow, although among the

Fishing

M 226 Near rivers, swamps, and lakes, fishing is one of the principal occupations of the native.

M [462] Unlike hunting which is practiced only by men, fishing is done by both men and women. The latter, however, practice it only occasionally and fish only by damming up part of a river bed or marsh. The dam is usually built during the rainy season, but as long as the water is rising, the women leave all the sluices wide open. Toward the end of the rainy season, they narrow the drain channels and set large traps before the openings. These traps

M 226 285 are attached to strong wooden stakes on the shore near the dam. The traps are made of splints from the ribs of raffia leaves and are plaited in openwork with the open spaces varying in size. The exterior form is always the same. Cylindrical at one end [85] and the other end closed along the diameter, the trap resembles a large cone ending in a line at the top. These traps

S M [227 285]

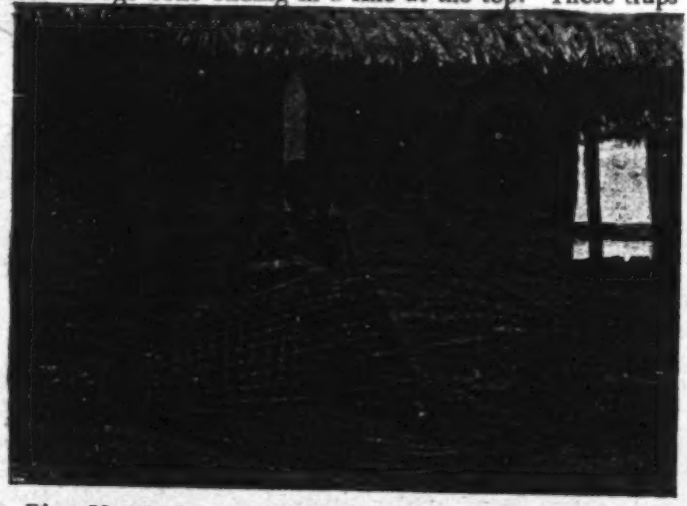


Fig. 52. Making a Fish Trap among the Wadia and Tumba.

are built over a framework made of two, three, or four hoops. Their diameters vary according to their positions. They are set inside the trap, the largest one at the base, the smallest one toward the upper end. The transverse elements, doubled and woven alternately in and out, are spaced 10 to 15 centimeters apart and are usually made of strips of rattan. The inner trap, or entry trap, is plaited in the shape of a broad fan, conical

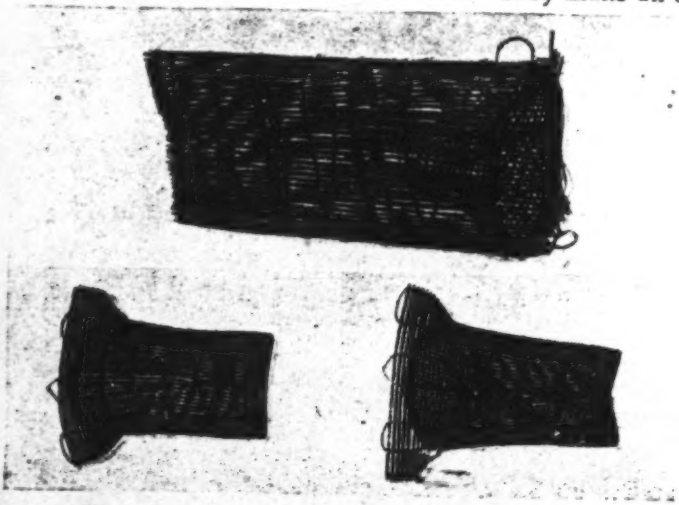
in form, with an ellipsoidal base. The open top is the entrance hole. The ends of the splints overlap somewhat on the inside in order to prevent the trapped fish from retracing their paths and escaping. 226 285

These traps are made only by men. When the plaiting is done, the work is flat, and then the finished latticework is fastened to the frame. [462]

The trap is opened by detaching the binding that closes the top.

As the waters recede, a woman lowers the trap. Morning and evening she comes to inspect it and to gather the captured fish. 226
[86]

When the waters have fully subsided, the women assemble and go up the river or into the swamp. Standing across the full width of the watercourse, they walk down, chasing before them the fish that remained in the dammed-off area. They make an ear-



[226 285]

Fig. 53. Fish Traps used by the Peoples of Lake Leopold II.

shattering din, slapping the water with broad sticks or churning it with arms and legs. The hunted and terrified fish flee wildly only to be caught eventually in the trap. If they try to break through the line of women, the latter do not hesitate to grab and fling them on the bank. [Ed., the text is not translated from the second paragraph, page 86, to the second paragraph, page 87.]

S M 226 industry of it. This sort of thing flourishes especially among the riparian people in the country of the Basakata, Balesa, and Mosengere.

S M 226 361 In the region of the lower Fimi, as well as along the marshy banks of the lower Lulonga, native fishing camps are quite numerous. They are all of the same type and [94] never have the character of a permanent settlement. At the end of the rainy season one sees families of riparian peoples leave their villages temporarily and settle along the marshy rivers. Men and women make this move, while children, old people, and a few able-bodied adults stay in the village to guard the homes.

The fishing camps are set up in very rudimentary fashion. The huts are merely shelters, refuges.

S M [462] Gathering salt grass for making salt is the chief task of the women. The men do the fishing.

S M 226 All the methods for fishing individually are used, but the bulk of the work is done communally.

The procedures are quite varied. We will mention the following.

1) Damming the mouths of small rivers and minor tributaries, along with setting traps in front of the escape channel and the method of driving the fish described above.

S M [286 386] 2) Fishing with a net. Unlike the nets used for hunting, the fishing nets are made of raffia fibers. The type of knot is the same, but the technique is more like the one used for plaiting the hair. The native carefully dyes the fibers black in order to make the mesh invisible under water. He attaches small cylindrical sections of a very light wood to the upper part of the net to serve as floats. At the opposite edge, he attaches the sinkers, made of cylindrical pieces of baked clay. The floats and sinkers are made so that they counterbalance each other and maintain the net in a vertical position in the water. These nets are 20 to 25 meters long. If necessary, the natives use a series of nets and dam the whole river in this way. Five to ten men are stationed with large baskets along the nets. The women go up the river 100 to 200 meters, enter the water, and form a chain to drive the fish before them. These are caught in the meshes of the nets and attract the attention of the fishermen by the efforts they

MS 258 Among the Mosengere, Bobaie, Basakata, Ipanga, Batitu, Bokala, and Yaelima, on the other hand, the natives still use the primitive process.

This varies according to the region, insofar as the materials used in the preparation are concerned.

Among the Mosengere, Wadia, Tumba, Basakata, and Bobaie, the natives use only the salt grass that grows abundantly in the marshes and along the marshy banks of certain rivers in the region.

In the territory of the Ipanga, Batitu, Bokala, and Yaelima, where this precious resource is lacking, the natives use the trunks of banana trees and especially the flowers of palm trees, whose ashes are quite rich in alkaline matter.

MS Salt grass is harvested toward the end of the dry season.

[361] At this time groups of Mosengere, Wadia, Tumba, Bobaie, and Basakata of the interior leave their villages to camp along the rivers with marshy banks.

MS [342] They choose a site suitable for setting up the few huts that will serve them as shelters during their temporary sojourn in the region. These huts are usually very poorly constructed. Built hastily and carelessly, they are provisional shelters, refuges for the night, rather than dwellings.

MS 258 423 In former times the whole expanse of the marshy plain covered with salt grass was divided into sections.

Each native group had its own well-defined area and exploited it exclusively. [107]

The site for the huts occupied by each such group was determined by the location of the familial reservation or domain and was chosen so as to lie in the center of it.

The time of year when the salt grass was gathered and the length of the period of exploitation were regulated. In short, the preparation of salt was a national industry, governed by special laws to which the whole tribe had to conform.

At the present time, the groups gather salt grass wherever they think best, without regard for the customs and rights of the past. This work of harvesting the grass falls to the women.

MS 258 462 While the men are fishing, the women, provided with large knives, cut down the tall grass that grows in the marshes or along

MS 258 462 the flooded banks of all the rivers in the Mosengere-Basakata region. When the nature of the ground and the level of the river permit, the grass is spread out on the spot to dry in the sun, while in flooded areas the woman loads the harvest in the canoe and takes it to the temporary village set up [108] on the bank. The dry grass is packed in stacks which are like the haystacks on our European farms.

MS 258 When a family deems that its harvest of grass is sufficient, the chief of the group prepares the incinerating grounds or furnace. Pulverized earth from small termites' nests is mixed with mud from the river. The mixture is well worked and kneaded so as to make a firm and pliant paste and is then spread over the surface of a small hole from 15 to 20 centimeters deep and one or two meters square.

MS 258 462 When this coating is entirely dry, the women begin their work. One of them loads the furnace and lights it, while the others bring in grass from the stacks.

As the first pile burns down, the woman in charge of the

Fig. 63. Stacks of Salt Grass, among the Bobaie.

MS [533] furnace throws in new sheaves, and the work, accompanied by a low, monotonous chant, continues without pause until the full harvest of salt grass is burned.

MS 258 834 462 The burning usually lasts a whole day. During this time and during the period when the furnace is being prepared, all

MS 258 [834] MS 258 [285] 462

sexual relations are strictly forbidden between the head of the family and the woman in charge of the burning.

When the last sprig is burned, the fire extinguished, and the ashes cold, the women heap them in large baskets.

Meanwhile the head of the family has made a sort of large funnel out of broad and tough rattan splints, bound with fine thongs of raffia stems and lianas. These funnels vary between two and three meters in height. The diameter of the large opening is one and a half to two meters. The bottom is formed by the cluster of rattan splints, roughly tied with a broad rattan thong. This funnel is placed upright between three or four sticks planted in the ground. An earthenware jar is placed under the funnel. The women line the inside of the funnel with banana leaves, placed on top of each other in such a way as to make the sides completely [109] waterproof. They next pour the ashes from the incineration into the funnel, pressing and squeezing them as much as possible.

When the funnel is three-fourths full, the woman draws about ten pots of water, or about 50 liters, and pours them over the ashes. This water takes two or sometimes three days to spread through the ashes. When the ashes are saturated, the woman pours two or three more pots of water into the funnel. From then on there is a slow drain of water, strongly salted from the dissolution of the soluble alkaline matter contained in the ashes. The water is caught in the earthenware jar under the funnel. The woman thus obtains four or five pots of a strong salt solution and two pots of water less saturated with salt. After putting aside her six or seven pots of salt water, the woman lights a fire and puts one or several earthenware bowls over it. Into these, little by little, she pours the strong salt solution, which she allows to boil.

When the water evaporates, the first salt deposit forms on the bottom and sides of the bowl.

MS [415]

The heat from these evaporation hearths is so intense that it is impossible to come near them. The woman therefore carefully provides herself with two long ladles to refill the bowls at a distance as the evaporation progresses. The whole lot is left on the fire until all the salt water is evaporated. Even after the evaporation is completed, the woman leaves the jar over the fire, which she stokes, so as to completely dry and solidify the salt deposit. This

M S 258 deposit naturally acquires the shape of the pot, which is finally [462] overheated and bursts, while the salt block remains intact.

When the salt is finally prepared, the family group returns to the village. The temporary installations are abandoned and may be used by other families who may do with them as they please.

M S 258 422 The salt is divided into two parts.

One part makes up the family reserves, reckoned according to the needs of each family in the group, clan, or village which undertook the exploitation. The rest is divided equally among all the members who took part in [110] the harvest, except that the chief and the woman who was in charge of the burning receive double shares.

The salt reserved for family needs is used in the preparation of food and remains the inalienable property of the family. The share distributed to the participants in the undertaking becomes their private property .

M S 258 422 435 Each one of them, man or woman, disposes of his share as he sees fit. Most often the natives use this as trade goods. Among certain tribes, notably the Mosengere, Wadia, Basakata, and Bobaie, the salt blocks are used as currency or as a common trade item whose value is determined by the weight.

M S 258 435 Before our [Ed., European] penetration into the region and more especially before the introduction of legal tender and its imposition by the administration, salt played a much more important part in the economic life of these primitives.

At the present time, it is used only in local transactions.

M 326 The blacksmith and his family, for example, never participate in the preparation of salt. He exchanges the products of his trade, knives, arrowheads, or spearheads, for the stock of the salt makers. [111]

M 437 It even quite frequently happens that the salt makers sell their surplus as a mere commodity to the highest bidder. They bring it to market, display it for sale, haggle about the price in the same fashion as they do for manioc tubers, smoked fish, smoked meat, or baskets of peanuts.

M 422 562 It is singular and interesting to note that the proceeds from this sale do not entirely go to the woman who owns the salt.

262 The natives are familiar with two kinds of manioc, sweet and bitter.

Sweet manioc is not highly valued, owing to its insipid taste and the poor consistency of the chikwangue made from it.

252 Aside from the soaking, which is done only for bitter manioc, chikwangue is prepared in the same way whether the flour comes from sweet or bitter manioc.

The first harvest of manioc tubers takes place eight to ten months after planting. The natives, however, do not begin harvesting them in earnest until the second year. Only the woman [462] does this work.

[482] The manioc tubers are piled in large baskets carried on the back and taken to the soaking well, a pond of putrid, dirty, muddy water giving off a highly unpleasant odor of putrefaction and fermentation, which is reserved for this task.

252 462 The manioc roots remain submerged from five to eight days to make them ferment and thus eliminate their bitter taste. At the end of this period the woman returns to the pond, tucks up her primitive loincloth as high as possible and enters the swamp. She sinks in up to her knees, and plunging her hands and arms into the mire, she pulls out the roots one by one and throws them on the bank. When her supply seems sufficient, she piles the roots in her basket and goes to wash them in the river. Returning to the village, she cuts the tubers, lets them dry a little in the sun, and then peels them. The Bakete, Banfumungu, and all the tribes of the Fimi-Lake Leopold II-Lukenie region, up to the boundaries of Bobaie and Balesa territory, chop the pieces of manioc root before reducing them to flour, while the Ipanga, Batitu, Yaelima and Bokala crush them between the fingers before throwing them between the fingers before throwing them in the mortar.

412 The chikwangue knife has a double-edged blade, a median rib, and a long, relatively broad oval form. It is pointed at both ends. One of these ends is [120] embedded in a wooden handle with a doubly concave vertical section.

The museum [Ed., Museum of the Belgian Congo] now has only two of these knives, but they are found in every native hut in the Kasai-Fimi-Lukenie region up to the Oshwe sector. It is, however, almost impossible to buy them from the natives. A woman, unable to do without her chikwangue knife a single day

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and never having a spare one, will not let one go at any price.

A woman chops the manioc on a large wooden tray, a crude, slightly hollowed board roughly rectangular in shape among the Bateke, Banfumungu, and Baboma, but circular among the Tumba, Wadia, Mosengere, Bolia, Bobaie, Basakata, and Balesa.

After having chopped up the manioc tubers as finely as she can with the primitive tool at her disposal, the woman removes the woody fibers, remains of rind, and other hard bodies. She then takes the etuti with both hands and rocks it back and forth. While doing this, she is careful to shake the flour from time to time and to remove the impurities she finds in it.

Fig. 67. Preparation of Manioc Flour among the Bobaie. Special Form of Knife to Chop Manioc.

When the flour is quite fine, the housewife sprinkles it with a little water, [121] kneads it, works it into a firm dough of a pale grayish-white color, and carefully removes every little trace of impurities. She then divides the dough into pieces the size of a cubic decimeter which she rolls into more or less symmetrical balls or into sausages 20 to 25 centimeters long. These balls or sausages are carefully wrapped in banana or masisa leaves, and the whole bundle is tied with very pliant rattan or raffia splints which serve as string.

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263 wild [140] throughout the region we visited. All the tribes are acquainted with it and use it regularly.

222 462 252 263 Collecting and preparing pili-pili are tasks especially reserved to women. Upon returning from the fields, a woman spreads the fruits on a mat before her hut and lets them dry for five or six days. Sometimes she uses them fresh, mixing them with palm oil enhanced with salt. The native uses this sauce to season his dishes according to taste.

252 263 412 When the pili-pili is quite dry, the woman pulverizes it in a small wooden mortar with a cylindrical pestle or with a small piece of elephant's tusk. The shape of the mortars used for this purpose by the different peoples of the Lukenie varies a great deal. From the Bateke to the Batete, we found only very crude mortars hollowed out from the trunk of a tree. Among the Yaelima and Ipanga this utensil is more carefully worked and finished. The shape is rather like that of a small rectangular box without a lid, but provided with a lug. Among the Basongo-Meno and Bankutshu of the Bena Dibele-Kole region, we collected very crudely shaped and primitive mortars, while others were well made and carefully carved. All of them, however, have the common characteristic of an elongated vertical form, and most of them have a leg. The pestles are always quite long.

We thus again find three ethnic zones characterized by the special shape of these utensils. Of course, this fact alone could not serve as the basis of any ethnic classification, but it might have a relative value and importance in drawing general conclusions based on the whole assemblage of the ethnic characteristics of these various peoples.

263 Once reduced to a fine powder, pili-pili pepper is mixed with salt to season food after cooking. All sauces are spiced with a generous pinch of this pepper. Meat is sprinkled with it, or even stuffed with whole peppers.

When the natives are traveling, they merely pick a few pili-pili and squeeze the juice into the food while it is cooking. [141]

276 The kola nut also is very well known as a stimulant and is widely used. The kola tree is found nearly everywhere. The natives gather the fruit and chew it. Women do not indulge.

276 842 According to native belief, the kola nut ensures the fertility of a woman if sexual relations take place the night after the man has used this stimulant.

276 The regular use of kola induces very intense nervous excitement. We noticed that the adolescents and men in their prime scarcely use it. Only the old people use it regularly. Kakua, the old native chief, chewed it from morning to night. One day I pointed this out to him, asking if he were not afraid of the dangerous effects of this overindulgence. He proudly pointed out to me the huts of his seven wives, saying, "Ask them if they don't have children!"

276 263 278 Among the stimulants we may also mention the peanut, widely used by all the tribes, a type of small ground pea, and certain tree roots known to the natives but the exact nature of which we unfortunately could not determine. It is well to note, moreover, that most of the natives use the stimulants as medicaments as well as condiments. They are used for intestinal pains, colic, and as purgatives.

Fig. 81. Carrying Firewood.

467 252 In all the tribes the preparation of food and meals is exclusively the task of women. They always do it with great care [142]

252 The kitchen, if it can be called one, is always very simple. If the weather is good, cooking is done in the open in the middle of the village, in front of the hut or behind it,

[483] 383 and very often in the shade of the banana trees. If the weather is rainy or cold, the women prepares the meals inside the hut. [Ed., a passage is omitted here.]

264 [445] spherical calotte, and also wooden plates. Sometimes also simple leaves are used as plates, unless the food is served in the cooking pots.

The whole meal is spread on the ground. [144]

The man squats on his mat and dips leisurely in the dishes with his hand, moving from one to another according to his taste.

[527] The meal is always eaten in silence. Even when several friends eat together, they never talk during the meal.

After the meal the natives carefully wash their hands and teeth and rinse out their mouths several times.

Beverages

271 415 Water is the only beverage they drink at mealtime, and they use it quite rarely. If they do not have a wooden or earthenware cup, they use part of a calabash or simply a leaf rolled into a little cone.

Fig. 83. Water Carrier.

312 462 857 482 Water usually comes from a spring near the village. The natives use river water only when it is quite clear. The women and children have the task of fetching water, a chore which is often quite hard. I visited many villages located along or near the river, whose source of drinking water was 20 to 30 minutes away.

At certain hours of the day and more especially in the morning as the sun first comes up, the women and children set out, a calabash or water jug balanced on their heads, to fetch the supply for the day.

271 415 Water is kept in large calabashes or earthenware jugs, sheltered from the sun in a corner of the hut.

Chapter VI

Married Life

As soon as an engaged pair begin to live together, as described above, they acquire all the rights and duties of married people. No special ceremony marks the consummation of the marriage.

To translate "married life" the Nkundó use the noun ifanelo, from the verb bfiana, which is the reciprocal form of the root -bal, "to get married." The noun, like the verb, is used in the physical as well as the moral and social sense. Our terms "household" and "family" have no exact equivalents in their language. The only term they have is ilongo, denoting the family in the broad sense that includes all related persons; but it could easily be adopted to translate our European terms. (1)

> 1. From the absence of a specific name, we cannot conclude that the thing itself is lacking. The Nkundó have a family in the sense of a household, though their idea of it and their organization is different from that of many peoples. But the word familia had a very different meaning among the Romans than that given to the French word, which also has a double meaning.

In this chapter we will examine the position of the spouses in relation to each other: the division of labor, property, various rights and duties, the relationship of the spouses with their families or relatives by marriage, and, finally, extramarital sexual relations.

Article I. The Division of Labor

The care of the household falls to the woman. It includes the preserving and preparation of food, the cleaning of the hut and the court, the planting and care of the fields and various crops, and the care of the [261] children. She also fishes with scoops and does

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basketwork (mats, baskets, scoops). Among the Elinga women mold and fire the pots. It is also the woman who gathers the small pieces of firewood for which a knife and a machete are adequate; the large pieces of wood which must be cut with an axe are brought by the husband. She, too, is the one who gathers the vegetables, mushrooms, and caterpillars. She tends to the extraction of oil, makes the salt, and goes to the markets. And she also takes care of the farmyard.

A man, for his part, gives his attention not only to various political and social pursuits, but also to those tasks which are more difficult, more dangerous, more in conformity with his nature and constitution, such as hunting, fishing, cutting clusters of palm nuts, working in wood and metal, building the hut and annexes, weaving the nets and screens for fishing, felling the forest for cultivation (the woman burns the growth, then plants and cares for the crops).

Thus the division of labor is well regulated. Each one takes care of the task that suits his nature. We are not too astonished at the fact that a man never helps his wife, or vice versa; each limits himself to his own sphere. The Nkundó would consider it shameful to participate in the work of the opposite sex. Neither one nor the other complains about the matter. Besides, the fact that a woman has most of the trouble in the household, especially if there are several children, is in conformity with the nature of things. Consequently, we would be mistaken in considering the Nkundó woman a beast of burden and her husband a lazy profiteer. (1) [262]

1. Compare what I have said with what was written by Father Dubernet in Missions Catholiques, 65th year, no. 3385, August, 1933, p. 387: "Except for the rare few who are in a position of wealth, the woman, among the Blacks we have known, tends to her household tasks more or less like a good peasant back home. She has seldom seemed to us the beast of burden that others have been pleased to describe."

[92] THE ECONOMIC LIFE OF THE MONGO NEGRO

INDUSTRY

241 One might say that nature throws into the lap of the Mongo
461 Negro everything he needs in order to exist so that he does not have
181 to exert himself in the slightest to get it. Generally speaking, he has only to look for his food in the forest, to pick it up from the ground as it were, with the exception of his bananas, manioc roots, and moma (a yam that, if it is prepared well, reminds one of potatoes) which are cultivated by his women. Hence, it is quite natural that one finds little industry among the Mongo, and that the Mongo Negro is not prepared to put the least effort into developing or perfecting in any way that centuries-old industry which already exists.

461 He can eat, and that is the main thing as far as he is concerned.
181 A lazy, inert people, effeminate to the core, each one merely living on the efforts of his many wives and female slaves, cannot have a highly developed industry.

In general, except for hunting which is undertaken primarily by the young men of the village, the Mongo Negro does not bother about anything. Eating, sleeping, looking for and listening to quarrels, carousing at gatherings with sugar-cane beer until they are picked up in a drunken state by their wives (a spectacle one also sees in civilized Europe), this is the dreary, monotonous, drowsy life of the Mongo Negro, one of the least culturally developed but at the same time one of the most highly interesting tribes of the Evenaar district if not of the whole Congo.

He loathes and despises work and is indolence personified.

461 Notwithstanding the extreme idleness of the Mongo [93] people,
462 they do have some of the industry that is necessary for their existence. However, it is on a low level and not widespread. In general, the existing industries are carried on by either the men or the women, and a man will never undertake a job belonging to the women, and vice versa. The work is got done in groups or in family units; where a branch of an industry exists, it is the concern of a single person unless more workers are necessary in order to carry out the work.

283/198 The White hears only the difference in tempo, nothing more. The Negro miles away understands what is being telephoned.

The lokole language consists chiefly of metaphors and is thus not intelligible to any White in the whole of the Congo. The Negroes are proud of their invention and also pleased that the White, who otherwise can do everything, is not able to understand their lokole.

Every man has his own name (nkombo) on the lokole with which he makes himself known. Because such a name often covers several lines of script, chiefly expressed in metaphors giving facts of the public life of the Negro concerned, it would be a physical impossibility for a White to master the lokole language in the way a Negro does. Actually, not even all Negroes understand the art of beating the lokole.

[462] The women have a general name; beating the lokole is only for the men, and no woman understands the art. The women understand what is being broadcast when the lokole is beaten, but they cannot beat it themselves. Moreover, they would be ashamed to attempt it; this is no task for a woman, and they would be laughed at. The lokole name, or nkombo, of the woman is as follows:

Bali la tolombo basalaki lisala, basalaki tomboloko, tond' al' isusu, befambe eka lisala.

"Women in numbers, worked the garden, prepared much to eat, consisting of bananas, to eat out of the garden."

A White, personally, has no nkombo of his own on the lokole, but to announce the arrival of a White in a village, the following is spread around far and wide:

Lolema ja lifeka feka, esongo etenaka nkola.

"The bat flies about everywhere, the pin wounds the nails of the feet."

With "the bat flies about everywhere" is to be understood the government agent who goes from village to village collecting the taxes. [726] "The pin wounds the nails of the feet" means that, just as the Negroes go on the warpath with sharp pointed sticks dipped in poison to wound the enemies' feet, the government agent is always on his rounds with his rifle, ready for the fray.

The nkombo of the Catholic missionary is as follows: [102]

(1) Bansele nsele ba nkanga; (2) bofala boki ndaki lisako nda lokombo; (3) etafe bolo; (4) benanga bekendaka la mperu.

[104] III. WEAVING

286 The craft of the Mongo weaver is an honorable one and one that calls for much labor and attentiveness.

[177] Weaving is no longer as much in vogue as it was in earlier times, because the younger people buy European materials. However, the weaver is still able to earn his daily bread comfortably, because [291] the old people are too pagan to give up their old ingrained habit of wearing a loin cloth.

[462] Weaving is a craft carried on by men only. Some are very skillful in the weaving of materials and command our admiration. Pieces of really beautiful workmanship were offered to us for sale; I had myself seen them being woven.

286 The weaver takes his knife, goes into the forest, and cuts the 314 "mpekwa ia lifeke," the fibers of a certain kind of palm tree which he also sometimes plants on the open highway near his hut. As soon as he has sufficient fibers for the weaving he has in mind, he goes home and at his leisure scrapes the fibers with his knife until they are all of the same thickness.

286 After that he leaves them in the sun to dry. When they have dried sufficiently, he puts up in his hut or on the open highway the frame on which the fibers are to be hung.

After he has attached the fibers to the top cross-bar (they are bound between the top and bottom cross-bars), he holds down the bottom cross-bar with his foot and goes to work.

Often he uses fibers of different colors, and this gives a lovely effect to the piece of material.

Bofomi afom'eto, "the weaver is weaving material."

386 The weaver has a very simple way of giving the fibers their 314 different colors.

From the forest he fetches a liana (longoli) which contains the red, white, or black coloring agent, cuts it in pieces, puts them in a banana leaf which has been quickly scorched in the fire, adds some water and hangs all this, with the fibers, in a bag of banana leaves above the fire. When the dye has soaked thoroughly into the fibers, he has his colored fibers all ready [105] for the material he is about to weave. This mixture is called "bosaka."

Rope-making

283 The Mongo rope-maker (one can hardly call him a professional rope-maker) goes to the forest, fetches fibers from a certain kind of palm-tree, scrapes them nicely with his knife, and puts them in the sun to dry.

Whole coils of rope are made in this way. Native rope, finished in this manner, is of a good, strong quality. Nets for the hunt and also for fishing are made of it. As in the case of weaving, it is something done by the men only.

IV. BASKET AND MAT WEAVING

285 The weaving of baskets and mats is chiefly the work of the women,
462 especially the fine braidwork.

The men make only the large, roughly finished baskets needed for the transport of their copal. The braiding of mats is done only by the women.

285 From the forest they fetch the twigs of the Bolongote tree,
314 scrape them nicely or dry them in the sun, and, sitting down, braid their baskets and mats.

They make different kinds of baskets, but the raw materials necessary for braiding are the bokombe or likombe of the Bolongote tree.

285 One or two women together braid the mats on the flat ground. The names of the mats are as follows.

[435] 1. Efonzolo, the roughly finished mat (value, five mitakos).

2. Nkongŏle, the finely braided mat (value, half a franc).

3. Itundŏ or lofole, the little mat with which the dirt from the road and the ashes from the fire are carried away.

4. Ifefa, the little mat used to fan the fire.

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